Course Description
This American University course adds to your NSLC experience by introducing you to forensic science. This introductory course is designed for students who are interested in learning the fundamentals of using science to solve crime. It provides a basic overview of the crime scene investigation process and the issues involved in the presentation of forensic evidence in court. Students learn about the identification, documentation, and collection of physical evidence, including fingerprints, shoe impressions, hair and fibers, firearms evidence, and questioned documents. The class discusses the impact of television and other media on the field of forensic science.

Online Learning
This is an asynchronous online course, meaning that our course materials (readings, recorded lectures, discussion boards, and more) are provided to you through the Blackboard platform. We don't have regular live sessions, so you can work through the material at your own pace, abiding by periodic deadlines set by your instructor. Your instructor will be available for online office hours to address questions, and you'll interact with other students in the course through Blackboard.

Course Objectives
- Understand the general principles of forensic science;
- Explore how forensic evidence is utilized by police and the courts;
- Engage with how forensic science is portrayed in the mainstream media;
- Recognize evidence and its value;
- Learn the definitions of key terms used in the field of forensic science;

Learning Outcomes
- Understand crime scene protocol
- Identify how forensic evidence is used in the criminal justice system;
- Critically analyze the science behind the criminalistics used in TV shows, books, or movies.
- Assess the utility of various forensic practices
- Productively utilize research and writing skills to produce a “final case study” paper.

Assignments (Subject to change)
All assignments are due no more than 30 days after the end of your program.

1. Class Participation (20% of final grade): Students are expected to participate actively in class discussions through our online platform, with both original contributions and responses to classmates.

2. Online Homework Assignments (30% of final grade): Assignments will require you to complete various pieces of your Case Study before it is due. Assignment 1 will ask you to select a case study. Assignment 2 will ask you to identify the forensic evidence that is used in your case study. Assignment 3 will ask you to list at least three sources that you will use in your final case study paper.

4. Final Case Study (40% of final grade): The case study consists of an analysis of a fictional criminal case you have found in a television show (e.g. CSI, Law and Order), movie, or book. A well-written case study should present the science behind criminalistics used in the TV show, film, or book you have chosen. You should focus on the physical and/or biological evidence that was gathered, and the tests used to analyze it, as well as how the evidence was presented and whether or not the depiction of the case accurately portrays real-life forensic practices.